

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

“Breeding Waterfowl Habitat Conservation”

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries



April 2, 2015

Introduction

Louisiana traditionally has the highest duck harvest in the United States, averaging over 2.5 million annually in the last 5 years. The overwhelming majority of those ducks are produced in breeding habitats in the northern United States and Canada before migrating south to Louisiana's marshes, fields, and forested wetlands in the fall and winter. The conservation of those breeding habitats is critical to the long-term health of waterfowl populations in the Mississippi Flyway and the opportunities for Louisiana waterfowl hunters.

Since at least 1965, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has provided funding to support conservation of breeding-grounds habitat for migratory waterfowl and by statute allocates a portion of annual hunting license revenue for that purpose. Specifically, R.S. 56:104(A)(1)(b) states:

An amount equal to ten percent of the fees collected from the sale of hunting licenses shall be dedicated by the commission to the development and preservation of breeding grounds for migratory waterfowl, the funds to be expended for such purposes through Ducks Unlimited, Inc. or under the direction of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission at its discretion ...

Over the last 5 years, an average of \$322,645 annually has been awarded in 2-year or 3-year contracts for the protection, restoration, and enhancement of breeding waterfowl habitat. The current contract expires on June 30, 2015 and LDWF is soliciting 3-year proposals for use of all or a portion of that funding during the July 2015 through June 2018 period. Multiple contracts for partial amounts of the available funding have been awarded in the past at the discretion of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC).

Eligibility

Any federal or state agency, conservation organization or individual with a demonstrated competence in and history of breeding waterfowl habitat conservation is eligible to submit a proposal. A cover letter describing that competence and history must accompany the proposal for use in the first phase of proposal evaluation.

Conservation Funding Priorities

The statute language is specific to "development and preservation of breeding grounds", and priority will be given to proposals that directly impact important breeding habitats for waterfowl species in geographic locations that have a strong link to Louisiana's wintering habitats. Consistency with priority conservation needs described in regional conservation plans such as those from the Prairie Pothole and Prairie Habitat Joint Ventures in the United States

and Canada respectively is important. Eligible conservation activities include, but shall not be limited to:

1. Permanent habitat protection, such as purchase or perpetual conservation easements on wetland and grassland habitats with demonstrated or expected value to breeding waterfowl.
2. Increased breeding habitat through restoration of drained wetlands, creation of new wetland habitat, or conversion of cultivated habitat to grassland.
3. Management of existing breeding habitat.

Activities such as conservation outreach and education, public policy development or advocacy, or habitat work not specifically targeted at migratory waterfowl will not be considered for funding.

Matching Funds

Although matching funds are not mandated in the legislation, they have been and will continue to be an important factor in evaluating and selecting proposals for funding. Matching funds must be cash or in-kind services directly applied to habitat work done during the term of the contract. Source and certainty of matching funds is required if claimed in the proposal.

Submission, Presentation, Evaluation, and Award Dates

Proposals will be accepted through Friday, May 22nd and may be submitted to the LDWF Waterfowl Program Manager via regular mail, fax, or e-mail at:

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The top qualifying proposals, as determined by an initial review by the LDWF Waterfowl Section staff, will be presented to the LWFC at their monthly meeting on June 4, 2015 starting at 9:30 AM in the Louisiana Room on the first floor of the LDWF Headquarters Building. No more than 5 prospective grantees will be given 15 minutes to present proposals to the LWFC. Waterfowl Program Manager will inform prospective grantees about the need for a presentation no later than Tuesday, May 26, 2015.

After the proposal presentations in June, Waterfowl Section staff will rigorously evaluate each proposal for consistency with goals and priorities of this program and regional conservation plans, scientific validity of the value of proposed conservation activities to breeding waterfowl, migratory link between project areas and Louisiana, technical merit and probability of successful completion of proposed work plan, and cost effectiveness including matching funds for securing, restoring, and enhancing as much habitat for as long as possible. A summary of the Waterfowl Section staff's proposal evaluations will be prepared and presented to the LWFC at their meeting on July 2, 2015.

Following presentation of the Waterfowl Section's evaluation, the LWFC will make public selection of proposals for funding and the amount awarded. Grantees will be contacted shortly after the meeting, and contracts will be initiated immediately.

Monitoring

Each funded project will be monitored by LDWF Waterfowl Program Manager through at least annual reports and 1 comprehensive project-site visit late in the contract period. Mandatory reporting will be specified in the contract. Accomplishment of proposed conservation activities must be demonstrated in the field at actual project sites, and financial records must be verified during this time. Expenses for project-site visit will be paid by LDWF and need not be included in proposal.

The last 2 successful proposals and past reports can be seen at:

<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/hunting/breeding-waterfowl-habitat>

Any questions regarding this funding opportunity should be addressed to Larry Reynolds at 225-765-0456 or Lreynolds@wlf.la.gov